

January 15, 2009

Joseph Parker, PhD
Healthcare Outcomes Center Director
Office of Statewide Planning and Development
400 R Street, Suite 250
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Dr. Parker,

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment on the Inpatient Hospital Mortality Data for 2006 and 2007 soon to be publicly released by your department. Kaiser Permanente supports the sharing of health care performance data and participates in many voluntary and required initiatives sponsored by regulatory, accreditation and professional agencies. We believe public reporting of clinical quality data not only helps consumers make informed choices but improves the quality of care for everyone.

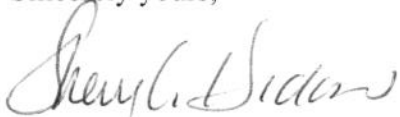
However, we do have some concerns about the data and the methodology used to calculate the mortality rates. The data does not appear to be adjusted for multiple co-morbid conditions that could contribute to the death of an inpatient and does not account for a patient who has determined they do not want to be resuscitated if their condition deteriorates while in the hospital. If these were taken into account, we believe our results would reduce the mortality rates. We would appreciate the opportunity to dialogue with OSHPD to address some of the issues that we have identified.

We would like to point out that the Department of Public Health licensed the cardiac catheterization lab in November 2007. This report includes only two months of data on Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty (PTCA) procedures performed at Kaiser Foundation Hospital - Walnut Creek (KFH- WCR). When the number of cases is small, eleven for KFH – WCR, it can adversely skew the data. We would like to proudly report that our care of patients presenting with signs and symptoms of a myocardial infarction is excellent as evidenced by our performance on all the process measures related to acute myocardial infarction. In September 2008, KFH – WCR was selected as a destination site by the Contra Costa County Emergency Medical System for the treatment of ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) because we met or exceeded performance on selection criteria. KFH-WCR participates in the American College of Cardiology National Cardiovascular Registry. Our risk adjusted mortality is 1.71% which is significantly lower than the mortality rate reported in your study (7.2%).

Kaiser Foundation Hospital – Walnut Creek
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KFH – WCR has implemented several programs to expand the scope of services and continually improve quality of care. In 2006 The Joint Commission determined KFHC – WCR met all criteria for Stroke Certification. In addition, they recertified the hospital in 2008. The data reported to the American Heart Association Get with the Guidelines Program on a quarterly basis exceeds performance expectations. In November 2008 the American Heart Association awarded us the Bronze medal for our Stroke Program.

Sincerely yours,



Sherie C Hickman
Chief Operating Officer
And Interim Sr. VP and Area Manager



Abdul Wali, MD
Chief of Staff